

REMARKS

I. INTRODUCTION

Initially, Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that claim 33 is allowed, and that claim 32 would be allowed if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 1-4, 6-8, 10-16 and 32 have been cancelled, without prejudice. Independent claim 17 has been amended to include the recitations of claim 33, which was indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form. New claims 34-41 have been added, which depend from independent claim 33 that has been indicated as being allowed. Claims 5, 9 and 21 were previously cancelled, without prejudice. Accordingly, claims 17-20, 22-31 and 33-41 are under consideration in the present application. Provided above, please find a claim listing indicating the claim cancellations, amendments, additions and current status of the claims on separate sheets so as to comply with the requirements set forth in 37 C.F.R. § 1.121. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter has been added.

II. REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)/103(a) SHOULD BE WITHDRAWN

Claims 17-20 and 27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,384,886 issued to Stift (hereinafter "Stift"). Claims 1-4, 6-8, 10, 15 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,843,204 to Ishikawa et al. (hereinafter "Ishikawa"), in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,139,567 to Matsuoka et al. (hereinafter "Matsuoka"). Claim 11 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over

Ishikawa in view of Matsuoka, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,647,417 to Wetzel et al. (hereinafter "Wetzel") or U.S. Patent No. 2,014,873 to Wildman (hereinafter "Wildman"). Claims 12 and 13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Ishikawa in view of Matsuoka, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,525,208 to Yasukawa et al. (hereinafter "Yasukawa"). Claim 14 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Ishikawa in view of Matsuoka and Yasukawa, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 2,855,290 to Freeman (hereinafter "Freeman"). Claims 22-25 and 27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Stift, in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,264,725 to Stockinger et al. (hereinafter "Stockinger"). Claims 23-27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Stift, in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,875,251 to Gordon et al. (hereinafter "Gordon"). Claims 28-31 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Stift in view of Stockinger or Gordon, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,592,631 to Cattelain (hereinafter "Cattelain").

As indicated above, claims 1-4, 6-8, 10-16 and 32 have been cancelled, without prejudice, rendering their 35 U.S.C. §102(b)/§103(a) rejections moot. Independent claim 17 has been amended to include the recitations of claim 32, which has been indicated as containing allowable subject matter. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 17 is allowable, and the claims that depend from amended independent claim 17 are also now allowable, at least based upon their dependency on amended independent claim 17.

Therefore, for at least the reasons as presented herein above, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the various 35 U.S.C. §102(b)/§103(a) rejections of the claims.

III. NEW CLAIMS 34-41

New claims 34-41 have been added above. New claims 34-41 depend from independent claim 33, and are deemed patentable at least for their dependency on independent claim 33, which has been indicated as being allowed.

IV. CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that pending claims 17-20, 22-31 and 33-41 are in condition for allowance. Prompt consideration, reconsideration and allowance of the present application are therefore earnestly solicited. If any issues remain outstanding, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned via the telephone number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: 

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